

Victoria Street Newz April 2011

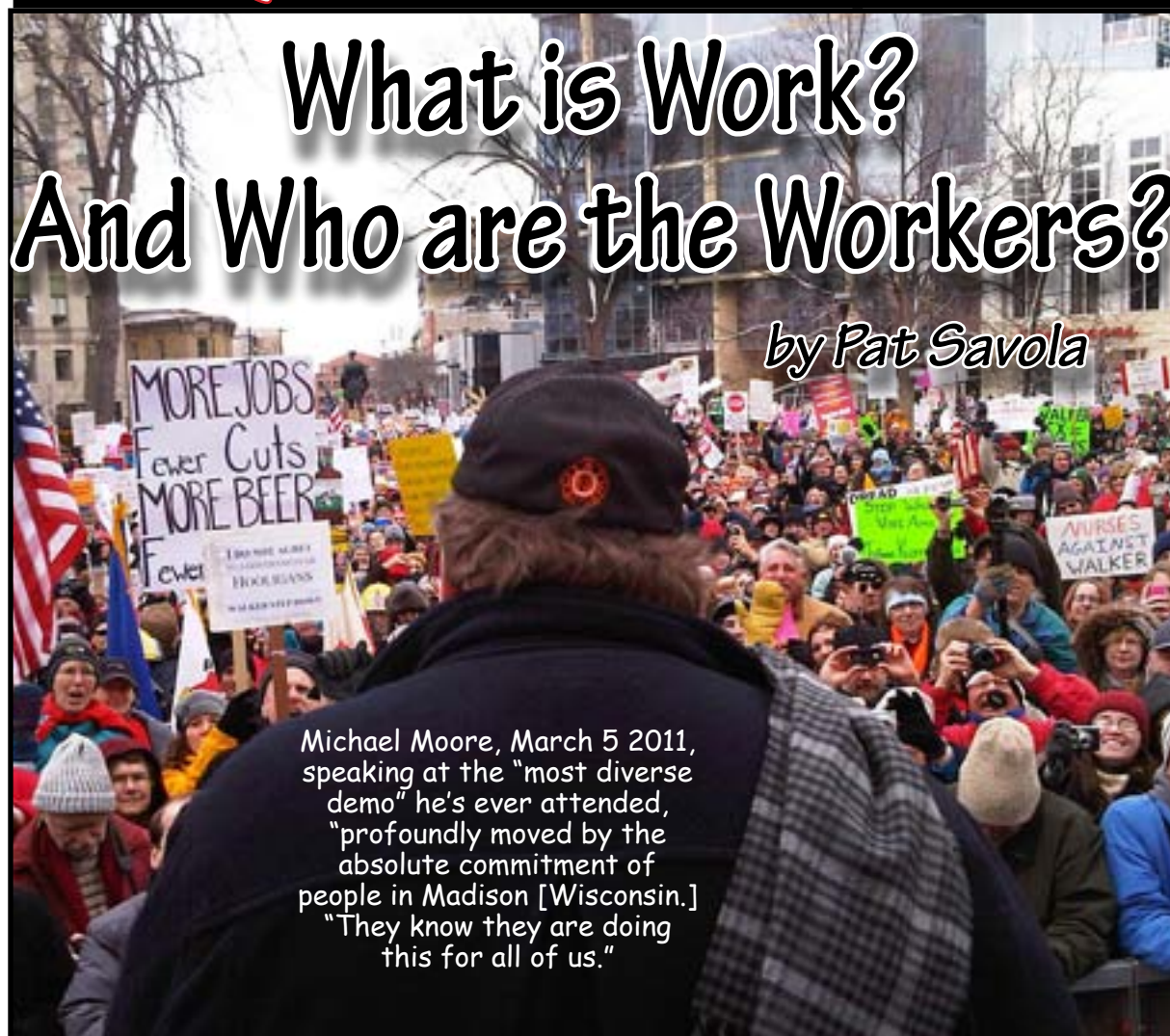
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What is Work? And Who are the Workers?

by Pat Savola

Michael Moore, March 5 2011,
speaking at the "most diverse
demo" he's ever attended,
"profoundly moved by the
absolute commitment of
people in Madison [Wisconsin]."
"They know they are doing
this for all of us."

"We all need love, work, and friends." I quote this phrase often to my clients. It is attributed to Alfred Adler, one of the earliest psychologists. (Adler was the first to move away from Freud's thinking, and was subsequently expelled from the club. Good work, Albert!)

At first glance, the phrase is self-explanatory. We all easily know what it means. However, upon looking deeper, the notion of "work" gets a lot more complicated. I offer musings about this complexity, but no answers.

What is "work"? We can easily understand when it's a job, employment, trade, profession or livelihood. In this guise, we tend to see work as identity. "I am a painter/cook/lawyer/teacher." Only rarely does one say, "My work is painting," or "I teach." We know work as a noun – the thing that I am – rather than by its actions. In this guise, work is how we make money, bring home the bacon (or daily bread) or – my favourite – how we earn our kibble.

continued on page three

About Street Newz

Coordinator: Janine Bandcroft
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Victoria Street Newz welcomes written submissions including personal stories, interviews, event reviews, cartoons, poetry, photographs, or artwork, but we can't guarantee everything will be published. We reserve the right to edit, and will not print anything libelous, racist, sexist, or homophobic. Letters sent to the editor are assumed to be for publication, must include phone number or email (if possible, for confirmation) and may be edited for length. You can publish using a pseudonym, or anonymously.

We are devoted to a triple bottom line philosophy - concerned about our environmental and social, as well as financial, well-being.

You can contribute to social change by supporting the *Victoria Street Newz* team, by pondering the root causes of poverty, and by working for peaceful, non-violent change.

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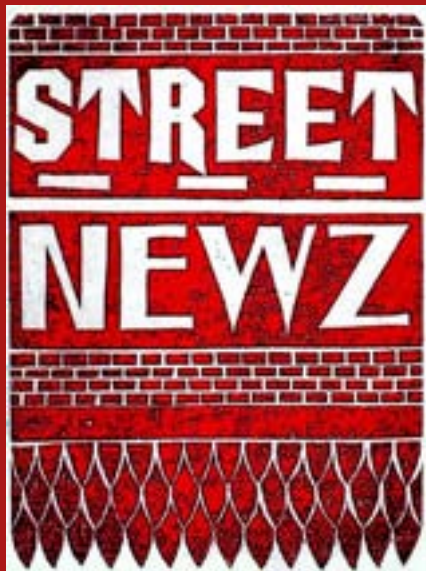


Submissions (due by the 1st Friday for the next month's issue), letters, or donations can be mailed or delivered to our mailbox at:

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Seven fast years have passed since the *Victoria Street Newz* was born, the idea conceived at a discussion about the need for more alternative media in our town, the seed nurtured on a fertile pathway created by its predecessor – *The Red Zone* – and fed by CEDCO – the Community Economic Development Corporation.

I was receiving unemployment insurance at the time (I think it makes more sense to call it than “employment” insurance), had a couple of degrees in hand (a Bachelor of Arts in English and a Bachelor of Education), and unflinching determination to live my values. If I couldn't find employment that was fair and honest, that promoted feminist principles of peace, co-operation and a restructuring of the societal arrangements that create poverty and inequity, then I would create it myself or die trying. Buddhists call it Right Livelihood. I'm not self defined as a Buddhist, but I do respect that we “should not engage in five types of business ... Business in weapons, business in human beings, business in meat, business in intoxicants, and business in poison.”

My UI/EI worker told me about the federally funded Self Employment Assistance Program and suggested I apply. It sounded fabulous – approved projects received a full year of support including marketing, accounting, and financial help. We, the *Street Newz* idea and I, made it past the first round. We were required to do a market survey to determine whether the project would succeed, and put together a mini business plan. These exercises were useful, but when I insisted that the best structure for the project is as non-profit or a co-operative society, we hit a wall. This government program was only designed to help privately owned and managed projects.

Luckily, CEDCO existed and I had already found them. They were extremely helpful in offering office space (a desk and phone, computer & software, photo-copier etc) and they even offered to help the government people learn about co-operatives.



just another rant

janinebandcroft.blogspot.com

Street Newz could be a pilot project of sorts, something the government agency could learn from and then shift their curriculum to

support alternative forms of small “c” capitalist endeavours. The *Street Newz* project was passed to the second level, where it was rejected. It wasn't sustainable, the woman informed me.

Devastated, but not surprised, I returned to CEDCO determined to succeed. The more research I had done, the more I realized this was work that I would be able and honoured to perform. Happy with my simple lifestyle, seeking enlightenment rather than great wealth, I proceeded. My parents, who encourage me to follow my heart, offered to pay my rent. I launched a preliminary version of the *Street Newz* on April 1st 2004, a 6 page double sided photocopy I took to a peace rally and sold by donation. I earned enough to pay the photocopy fees, and began to plan the launch of a real paper. On May 4th I was unable to avoid a car door that opened into my cycle path, and was forced into healing mode for a month or so.

The actual first *Street Newz* newspaper was launched July 2004 (and is online with all the other issues in the archives at relativenewz.ca). Vendors began to appear and the rest, as they say, is history. It's a full seven years later and although we haven't changed the world, I like to believe we've helped in some small way to inform and nurture a community who view the homeless and poor with compassion and understanding. Unfortunately our work seems to have no end, my dream of transforming the newz into a celebration of poetry and prose printed on a tree-free paper, remains distant. But we're still here, and a small family of us are housed and fed thanks to your support of this truly independent media project.

We hope you'll join us on April 1st at the Solstice Café, starting at 7:30 pm, for our 7th birthday celebration.



Rose Henry to attend International Conference

On behalf of the Bread and Roses Collective (the non-profit society established to support the *Victoria Street Newz*), I'm delighted to announce the decision to send Rose Henry to the INSP (International Network of Street Papers) conference.

Rose is a determined activist for First Nations, poor, and homeless people, and she represented *Street Newz* at the national conference in Chicago last year.

From the INSP: The INSP conference is a highlight of the international street paper calendar. Hosted in a different city each year, in partnership with the local street paper, the conference brings together street paper directors, editors, journalists and social workers for specialised skill-building workshops, consultancy sessions, roundtable discussions and best-practice exchange. The event also provides the rare and valuable opportunity for face-to-face networking, mutual support and motivation, which is particularly beneficial for smaller papers.

In 2011, INSP's 16th annual conference will be held in Glasgow (Scotland), 19th-22nd July. The three-day event will be attended by 100 editors, directors, journalists and social workers from street papers from over 25 countries from around the world. The aim of the conference is to build the capacity of individual street papers so they can continue providing high quality services to their homeless vendors.

This year, the conference will feature the third International Street Paper Awards. The International Street Paper Awards is a bi-annual event which seeks to celebrate the outstanding achievements of independent street paper journalism and the substantial impact made to social justice by INSP street papers on a local and global scale.



We're \$170 closer to sending Rose to Scotland this summer. Can you help?

Send a cheque to Street Newz, 1027 Pandora Ave, V8V 3P6, write INSP in the subject line.

Thanks!

Rose's Response: I am definitely into going and representing *Street Newz* at the conference.

I would also like to explain the latest level of poverty for me. For me and my family this is a new low for us. It has been over ten days now since our bathroom was shut down for renovations. The construction crew came in and removed the toilet, bath tub and was basin along with the cupboard where I stored a few items.. This means we have had no toilet in our apartment for which we pay over eight hundred and twenty-five dollars a month.

To make matters worse BC Hydro cut our power off the day it started to snow. Our property owner supported us - he is aware that our place has flooded four times in the past year and the refrigerator doesn't work correctly. He recommended that we unplug the refrigerator every few weeks and leave our bathroom heat lamps on so the walls dry out and mold and slow the growth of mushrooms through our ceiling and walls. The new building maintenance person immediately put an extension cord from the hallway into our unit so we can at least use our fridge and our microwave.

For my little family selling the *Street Newz* is very important. We depend on this income for our survival for the most basic needs such as food, rent and some gas for our car which I now use while on call for a non-profit society that cares for special needs people. As I go through my daily survival I pray that one day I will be rich enough to have my own fully usable bathroom, a little food in my fridge and that I don't have to ever worry about going without hydro because I don't have the money.

Work continued from cover ...

We can still rely on this understanding of work when we expand it to include paid or unpaid work, inside or outside the home. Changing diapers, serving on a community board, and baking muffins to sell at the farmers' market are all work. Many years ago – before recycle bins – I remember a young disabled man who combed the garbage bins of UBC for cans and bottles. I would regularly see him on the Broadway bus with two chock-full, gigantic plastic bags of things worth five cents each. He most certainly was working. (By the way, the next census will not collect data about unpaid work.)

There is another facet of work that is about “surmounting obstacles to achieve a goal.” Think about working to green the planet, organize Starbucks, or ensure safe working conditions for immigrant workers. These – and innumerable other worthy causes – are work.

Distinguishing what is “work” becomes more difficult when comparing to leisure and its subset, recreation. Every gardener knows that it takes work to grow vegetables. Digging, wheel barrowing, weeding... I remember a friend describing the back-breaking work of thinning a 50 foot row of tiny carrots. Yet gardeners also know that it's not all work. Finding the first peas of the season is a delight. Picking a ripe tomato and a handful of basil for supper is joy, not work! But picking 30 pounds of tomatoes in a cold rain because there's a good chance of a hard freeze overnight – definitely work. It's not always easy to distinguish work from reward.

Consider the continuum of recreation, sports and athletics. Jazzercise or yoga might be considered to be recreation. A gym workout might be recreation to some; it's probably work to an Afghan veteran teaching his or her body to function with a prosthetic leg. Elite athletes work hard to stay at the top of their game – both amateurs and professionals. So how do we recognize recreation from work?

We can try to discern work from play as a way to define “work.” Yet Silicon Valley's notion of seamlessly cultivating play and creativity to increase the productivity of work defies the simplicity of this test. Also, there are individuals lucky enough to believe that they play and get paid for it. I remember a math professor who said that he had never had a “real job.” His job was to play with math all day.

There are also idiosyncratic cases where some work is pleasant or fun for some people. Before becoming disabled, I loved digging; no shovel-job was work, just sheer enjoyment. And I understand that there are people for whom house-cleaning is fun – those who relish vacuuming, scrubbing, and tidying. Is it work if you like to do it?

A dictionary definition of “work” is “physical or mental effort or activity directed toward the production or accomplishment of something. “ This is broad and encompasses everything from day-dreaming about the next vacation to taking photos of the grand-children. But it doesn't help much to determine what is or isn't work.

So, even if it's not easy to define at its edges, it's still safe to say that we all know what work is. Which leads to the next question – who are the workers?

Dictionary definitions are, again, quite narrow. They emphasize workers as those doing industrial or manual labour, or specify members of the working class. And the working class has been historically defined as those doing manual labour. These definitions are woefully inadequate, as they imply that workers are only manual labourers. “Manual” means working with our hands, and almost all of us work with our hands every day. There are rare exceptions like Stephen Hawking. Given that “work” expands and overlaps into other areas, perhaps it's high time that “worker” and “working class” are expanded accordingly.

We are workers if we work – paid or unpaid – inside or outside the home. We are members of the working class if we work – paid or unpaid – inside or outside the home. We are workers if we wish for meaningful work. We are workers if we identify as health or service worker, artisan, professional, academic, dog-walker... If we work, then we are workers.



Pat Savola lives in Duncan, and is probably the only unionized private practise psychotherapist in Canada. IWW IU 610 Health Service Workers. Cover photo lifted from www.dangerousminds.net where there is no copyright indication.

International Workers' Day

From DJ Alperovitz

International Workers' Day, May 1st, is a day of special significance for the labour movement. It's a day of worldwide solidarity. A time to remember past struggles and to demonstrate our hope for a better future. A day to remember that an injury to one is an injury to all.

May Day is a day of remembrance and celebration for international labour and left-wing movements. It commonly sees organized street demonstrations and marches by working people and their labour unions throughout most of the world. May Day is a national holiday in more than 80 countries and is celebrated unofficially in many others.

International Workers' Day was originally recognized to commemorate the 1886 Haymarket Massacre in Chicago and working class struggle.

In 1884, the heart of the American labour movement was in Chicago. The Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions - in response to workers who were being forced to work more than twelve hours a day - passed a resolution stating that eight hours should constitute a day's work legally from May 1, 1886. The resolution further called for a general strike to achieve this goal.

The government of the day was terrified by the increasing revolutionary nature of the Anarchist and Labour Movements and prepared accordingly. By May 1st, the movement got momentum. On May 3, 1886, police fired into a crowd of strikers at the McCormick Reaper Works Factory, killing four and wounding many. Agitators called for a mass meeting the next day in Haymarket Square to protest the brutality. The Chicago Police marched into the square and ordered the meeting to disperse. At this moment a bomb was thrown into the ranks of the police, killing one and wounding about seventy others. The police opened fire on the spectators. The subsequent riot resulted in the deaths of seven policemen and an unknown number of protesters.

Following the bombing a reign of terror swept over Chicago. Meeting halls, union offices, printing shops and private homes were raided “Make the raids first and look up the law afterwards” was the public statement of J. Grinnell, the Illinois States Attorney.

The raids and repression, backed and encouraged by the press, weakened the eight-hour day movement. A major source of worry and fear for the ruling class was removed and both the American Labour and Anarchist movements suffered set backs. The raids had solved part of the problem, now scapegoats had to be found.

Eight men, all anarchists and active union organisers stood trial for murder. No proof was offered by the state that any of the eight had anything to do with the bomb. In fact, three had not even been at the meeting and another was there with his wife and children. A biased judge and jury and a hysterical press ensured that all eight were found guilty. Their only “crimes” were their anarchist ideas, union activity and the threat these held for the ruling class. Grinnell made it clear, “Anarchy is on trial...these men have been selected... because they are leaders.”

In spite of world wide protest, four of the Haymarket Martyrs were hanged. Half a million people lined the funeral cortege and 20,000 crowded into the cemetery. In 1893, the new Governor of Illinois made official what the working class in Chicago and across the world knew all along. He pardoned the Martyrs because of their obvious innocence and because “the trial was not fair.”

In 1889, at the first congress of the Second International meeting in Paris for the centennial of the French Revolution, the American delegation proposed that May 1st be adopted as a workers' holiday. This was to commemorate working class struggle and the “Martyrdom of the Chicago Eight.” Since then May Day has become a day for international solidarity.

May Day was formally recognized as an annual event at the International's Second Congress in 1891.

In 1904, the International Socialist Conference called on “all Social Democratic Party organizations and trade unions of all countries to demonstrate energetically on May 1st for the legal establishment of the 8-hour day, for the class demands of the proletariat, and for universal peace.” The congress made it “mandatory upon the proletarian organizations of all countries to stop work on May 1st, wherever it is possible without injury to the workers.”

In many countries, the working classes sought to make May Day an official holiday, and their efforts largely succeeded. May Day has long been a focal point for demonstrations by various labour unions, socialist, communist and anarchist groups.

In the United States and Canada, however, the official holiday for workers is Labour Day in September. This day was promoted by the Central Labor Union and the Knights of Labor, who organized the first parade in New York City. After the Haymarket Square riot in May, 1886, US President Grover Cleveland feared that commemorating Labor Day on May 1st could become an opportunity to commemorate the Haymarket Martyrs. Thus he moved in 1887 to support the Labor Day that the Knights of Labor supported.

Although May Day celebrations by socialist, anarchist and anti-globalization activists occurred in 1894 the government of Canada declared the first Monday in September as Canada's official Labour Day.

May Day remains an important day for Unions and community group protest in Canada despite the official Labour Day in September. The province of Quebec holds the Celebration of the International Labour Day (Fête des Travailleurs). The celebration, in Montreal, goes back to 1906.

May Day awareness is growing in Canada with workers now taking to the streets in Vancouver, Edmonton, Toronto, and Ottawa. It is time for Victoria to March On May Day. Join Us.

DJ is a Delegate with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Over the course of his working life three trade unions have cut him loose for advocating rank and file control of our Unions and work places. For more information about May Day Victoria visit maydaymarch.wordpress.com.

Street Profile -- Michael Wallace -- He Had It All

by Ernie Tadla

Michael had a loving stable childhood, success as an entrepreneur. In a split second, his slide into homelessness began.

Early beginnings:

Michael was born June 16, 1955 in England. He was the eldest son with 3 brothers and 1 sister. In his first year his parents moved to Paris, Ontario. His mother and father have enjoyed a loving relationship to this day. He grew up with the strict structure of the Evangelical Pentecostal faith. After moving to Southern California for 2 years, his parents moved back to Canada, and settled on Vancouver Island.

When he finished school, at Claremont High in 1973, he spent a year logging. In 1974 he began work in the manufacturing of cultured marble bathroom fixtures. Moonlighting he began his own renovation company, designing and installing exclusive high-end bathrooms throughout the Uplands and Broadmead areas of Victoria.

To be a successful entrepreneur one must possess strength of character and courage. Michael built and ran his business without the protection and benefits of working for a corporation or government institution. Resilience and persistence are also valuable traits. When the high interest rates of the early 1980s affected his renovation business, Michael began driving a garbage truck for BFI, who later helped him begin his own business again, this time in contract garbage collection. He got involved in a David and Goliath battle with the giant Laidlaw Waste Systems. He won the battle but lost the war. His wife deserted the family, leaving Michael with a bankrupt garbage business, and two sons ages five and three.

For survival, and to be involved in his children's life, Michael entered into the agriculture/horticulture business. During seasonal downturns he did contract renovation work.

The Accident: The Beginning of the End

March 5, 2002. At the peak of his business prowess Michael's younger son, age 17, was returning home from a school field trip in the back seat of another student's car. As some young, inexperienced, and immature drivers sometimes do, while moving at over 170 km/hour the driver lost control of the car and Michael's son's body was shattered. With a broken back, shattered arm, cracked pelvis, and head injuries, his life was instantly changed, and so was Michael's.

Devoted to his son's recovery, and with no safety nets of insurance coverage, an entrepreneur is entirely on his own. If he doesn't work, and is unable to look after his business, and clients, they fade fast. Forces beyond his control had left both his son, and Michael's income source, shattered.

The Insurance Corporation of British Columbia (ICBC) provided no financial assistance. Gradually, over the months, Michael lost everything including his tools, which are the most important item for a renovator's skills and ability. Then one day he had nowhere to go.

Michael found himself on Homeless Street. For 5 years he couch surfed, spent nights in slum housing, outside campsites, and slept in abandoned buildings. To prevent his disabled son from joining his dad on the streets, school friends took in his son. Michael's family offered no assistance. Living with this constant overpowering stress, he suffered and was hospitalized, multiple times, with chronic vomiting syndrome.

Hitting the Bottom

At his bottom, Michael contemplated suicide. A belief inside, unshackled by his guitar, was the prevention.

A fellow homeless person, the poet Paul Burnside, had poetry published in the *Victoria Street Newz* and suggested to Michael that he try dropping in at Janine Bancroft's (founder and editor-in-chief of Vic SNZ) Friday morning sessions at the Solstice Café on Pandora. These are casual non-agenda friendly chat gatherings where Street Newz writers, vendors, and friends meet.

Michael was wanting to avoid the usual places where the homeless hang out due to the negative atmosphere where some of the folk have resigned themselves to this lifestyle and do not seem motivated or serious to cross over the bridge. The atmosphere, which still contains drug dealing, dampened and depressed his spirits. He wanted urgently to cross over. He was looking to meet spiritually motivated individuals, energized to help people, who were willing to do whatever it took, to leave that part of their life behind.

This is what he found at Janine's Solstice gatherings. He was accepted as a regular guy, learned from others, found out about free counseling and free courses available to him at the U of Victoria. He accessed and enjoyed those opportunities. Janine, in her own



quiet caring way provided a consistency that encouraged and strengthened Michael. Janine provided insights, and opportunities, as she still does to this day. Michael described his meetings with Janine as being in a dark room where a candle is lit. He sat in the glow, and the light was Janine. Janine is one of Michael's most highly respected friends.

Little by little Michael's mind re-opened and his hope increased. He focused on his mind, body, and soul. He sought new information, studied, and modified his life. He continued with his guitar, and voice, to create over 300 original compositions of music.

With new opportunities, his attitude embraced hope. He had removed himself from the downtown core, away from the people he did not want to become, out of the city where he could do farm work, to earn money for the tools he needed, to do renovation work. He began checking Canadian Tire fliers for sales on tools, the tools to earn income. He again became responsible for \$750 a month for his son's care, \$375 for his own rent. He weathered the tests of patience and humility and started the process of regaining his independence.

Lessons Learned

Michael has Spinal Stenosis, and Osteoarthritis. Through lifestyle change Michael is the oldest member of his family tree to be heart attack free. He takes no pharmaceutical medications for his conditions. Michael believes consistent healthy choices of food, lifestyle, and environment provide the best opportunity for an individual to develop into their optimum potential.

Michael considers himself a mature, better person now. He has looked inside, from whence all growth begins. He asked himself, "What is my life?" He always was a worker, except now he focuses on the value of work, and the measure it provides to his personal character. Work is precious to him.

Seven and a half years from the date of the accident, his son received a settlement from ICBC. His son purchased a house, with a self-contained unit for his Dad. Michael moved in September 2009. With gardens he built, Michael produces much of his own food.

Michael now lives in constant gratitude. Before his fall, he admits he took some everyday things for granted, noticing the wonders he wanted. After sleeping in miscellaneous convoluted and compromising places for 5 years, every night when he crawls into his bed, he expresses Thanks, not just for his bed, but for his secure bed, for his warm bed, his clean bed, his dry bed, for bed sheets, for warm blankets, for a bathroom to go to in the middle of the night, for a roof over his head, for heat, for friends. Thank you, Thank you, Thank you!

What I Have Learned From Michael

1. I have learned that even with a happy stable family life and all the love and nurturing as a child, with good sound upbringing and values, homelessness can be only a split-second away.
2. Enjoying successes in your business, without any hint of drugs, homelessness can still get you in its grips.
3. Escaping the environment and association with homeless people can help you rebuild your life.
4. Extremely good things started happening to Michael - a home with his son, and love - came to him only after he had paid the price of not giving up, persistently being proactive in avoiding things that were of no value to his return, and initiating positive change. He chose the path less travelled by some other homeless people.
5. Michael stated, "The most important quality of life is Love." He has learned to allow time for friendships to grow, and then love may flourish. Michael aligned his thoughts, and lifestyle, with higher ideals; in response the universe has allowed his dream for love to be fulfilled. Michael believes "We must learn to Love ourselves with truth, and with care; then others may respond with their Love."

Final words from Michael

For all people, personal responsibility is absolute.

His message to homeless individuals

Accept responsibility. Seek help. Develop a plan. Work the plan. Modify the plan as necessary. Stick to the plan. Never, never, never give up. Always, always, always believe!

If you or someone you know would like to share a story for publication, contact Ernie at ernie@tadla.ca. We honor your uniqueness.



Why the Packers Back the Protesters

by Dave Zirin

After a thirty-year erosion of power, influence, and numerical strength, a period of reckoning has arrived for organized labor, and the terms of the debate couldn't be starker. It's not wages or benefits that are being negotiated in the twenty-first century. It's whether labor unions—and the basic protections they bring—will exist at all.¹

This can be seen dramatically in the two most high-profile labor disputes in the country, disputes that on their face couldn't seem more different. There are the public-sector workers of Wisconsin—the teachers, ambulance drivers, and child-care workers—trying to fend off Governor Scott Walker's efforts to legislate them out of existence. Then there are the N.F.L. players, facing an imminent lockout if they don't accept massive wage cuts and a longer season.

It seems almost comical to compare the two: after all, in Wisconsin, public-sector workers are attempting to defend decent-paying jobs that they can keep for decades and then retire with a sense of security. In the N.F.L., the Players Association is attempting to defend lucrative careers that last on average three and a half years, have a hundred per cent injury rate, and will statistically result in death twenty years earlier than the typical American male.

But both face someone across the negotiating table—Governor Walker or N.F.L. Commissioner Roger Goodell—who questions their right to exist and their right to organize. They are reading from the same neo-liberal playbook, and the only difference is that Goodell actually has a college degree and is probably just savvy enough not to take a prank call supposedly from one of the Koch brothers.² (When I was in Madison last week, I saw twenty eight-year-olds with a banner that read, "Scotty is as smart as my potty.") Goodell and the N.F.L. owners are guaranteed network-television and sponsorship money whether there are any games this year or not. That's why the owners, with nary a dissent, have announced that they are ready and willing to lock the doors, even if it forces the union to decertify and they lose the season.

But repression creates bizarre bedfellows. And one of the most bizarre, at least superficially, has been the support for the striking public workers from the N.F.L. Players Association and the Green Bay Packers.

The Packers won the Super Bowl a few weeks—and for the state, several lifetimes—before the explosion in Wisconsin. Scott Walker, just days before he threatened to call in the National Guard on the state's workers, immediately declared February "Packers month." But the Packers are more than the closest thing the state has to an official religion. They are the only non-profit, fan-owned team in all of major U.S. professional sports.³ This is a team with a hundred and twelve thousand owners. When they won the Super Bowl, their coach, Mike McCarthy, said, "We're a community-owned football team, so you can see all the fingerprints on our trophy."

Several players took the Green Bay ethos to heart and immediately backed the workers. Current players Brady Poppinga and Jason Spitz, and former Packers Curtis Fuller, Chris Jacke, Charles Jordan, Bob Long, and Steve Okoniewski said,

"We know that it is teamwork on and off the field that makes the Packers and Wisconsin great. As a publicly owned team we wouldn't have been able to win the Super Bowl without the support of our fans. It is the same dedication of our public workers every day that makes Wisconsin run.... But now in an unprecedented political attack Governor Walker is trying to take away their right to have a voice and bargain at work. The right to negotiate wages and benefits is a fundamental underpinning of our middle class. When workers join together it serves as a check on corporate power and helps ALL workers by raising community standards."

Rookie tight end Tom Crabtree tweeted, "i fully support wi unions and i think Gov. Walker is out of his damn mind."

None of these players have a particularly high profile. But as the struggle intensified, the team's defensive captain, Charles Woodson, couldn't stay silent, as I reported in the Nation.⁴

A former Heisman trophy winner at the University of Michigan, N.F.L. defensive player of the year, and perennial pro-bowler, Woodson is also the team's co-captain and union rep. His words landed in sports pages around the country:

"Thousands of dedicated Wisconsin public workers provide vital services for Wisconsin citizens. They are the teachers, nurses and child care workers who take care of us and our families. These hard working people are under an unprecedented attack to take away their basic rights to have a voice and collectively bargain at work."

It is an honor for me to play for the Super Bowl Champion Green Bay Packers and be a part of the Green Bay and Wisconsin communities. I am also honored as a member of the NFL Players Association to stand together with working families of Wisconsin and organized labor in their fight against this attempt to hurt them by targeting unions. I hope those leading the attack will sit down with Wisconsin's public workers and discuss the problems Wisconsin faces, so that together they can truly move Wisconsin forward."

Immediately, across Web message boards came the familiar notion that he should just "shut up and play." As one person wrote, "Stay out of it, Charles. Keep your mouth shut and do what you do best—just win." But as Woodson must realize, and as the wise, august message-board commenter clearly does not, this isn't a moment for any pro football player to just know his place and shut his mouth. It's about solidarity that both sides desperately need. Two very different labor forces both are facing battles for their respective futures against bosses that see them as expendable. It's the twenty-first-century fight: from the Governor's office to the gridiron.

Dave Zirin is the author of Bad Sports: How Owners are Ruining the Games we Love (Scribner) and just made the new documentary "Not Just a Game." Receive his column every week by emailing dave@edgeofsports.com.

1. http://www.newyorker.com/talk/comment/2011/03/07/110307taco_talk_hertzberg

2. <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/newsdesk/2011/02/fake-koch-running-for-congress.html>

3. <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/sportingscene/2011/01/those-non-profit-packers.html>

4. <http://www.thenation.com/blog/158747/breaking-news-packers-captain-charles-woodson-stands-wisconsins-workers>



The Conscious Impotence of Memory

by Brian Mason

No civilisation, culture or society has ever learnt from (the "mistakes" of) the past. There should be no surprise, and no little frustration, in this. Societies are missing the wherewithal to learn, not least because learning presumes a collective intelligence, consciousness and, especially, memory. These our societies lack. Consider T.S. Eliot's famous lines in Little Gidding:

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time

Yet the metaphor of memory presumes too much, on both sides. Even if history were to conduct itself in neat, tidy packets to be carried forward as lessons for future generations, there is no place for the lessons to be received, stored, understood, debated, taught and applied. No open mind awaits. As a result, we don't know where we are going any more than we know where we have come from. Eliot again: "This is the use of memory: for liberation ... from the future as well as the past." Though societies are incapable of learning from history neither are they condemned to repeat it. These are not real (any more than they are the only) choices.

Besides, from whose history would we prefer to learn – our "own" (whichever one that is) or others? Would we choose the good or the bad experiences from the past as the day's lesson? The victorious or the losing battles? Which moral and political quagmires would best instruct us? Shall we plumb the economic and social realms of the medieval period? The mysteries of pagan religion? Recent history or ancient? Perhaps, to simplify the matter, the Golden Age of Greece, short-lived as it was, could suffice for all of our instructional purposes: everything Western seems to have had its beginnings then. Mind you, there was little agreement among the ancients on how best to live a good life, notwithstanding their many admirable attempts to find the right path.

Lessons from history, then, are not the kind of thing that can be transmitted through time. If anything, the direction is reversed as it's the problems of the present that tend to determine how we perceive the past, not the other way around. British philosopher Peter Hacker's observations about philosophy are apropos: "Each generation has to earn insight, has to face its own obstacles and work out an understanding for itself." History, interesting to study and at times restorative, is no great teacher.

If history is neither neat nor tidy, historians themselves are a quibbling lot. They revise and debate their findings unceasingly, making it difficult to develop lesson plans for present and future living. So even if we possessed the capability to learn from history, reaching a consensus on the teacher's manual would be well nigh impossible. There are many reasons (beyond disagreeing historians) for this, foremost being the modern way we have grouped ourselves on this planet.

We live today in nation states, a relatively recent political arrangement for humanity. They are the true infrastructure of our time. As students of history, though, nations make slow learners. They have other career plans for themselves. "For total greed, rapacity, heartlessness, and irresponsibility there is nothing to match a nation," wrote Lewis Thomas in The Lives of Cells. He went on: "Nations, by law, are solitary, self-centered, withdrawn into themselves." These are not the qualities of a learner; in fact, they could not be more opposite. If nations were persons, you would not want to live next door to one. You might even prefer they be locked up somewhere for your own protection. Nations behave, for the most part, like short-tempered, myopic, hydra-headed monsters because that's precisely what they are – at least if recent history is any indication. Ahhhh, history: illustrative without being instructive.

There have been attempts (the United Nations comes to mind) to give nations a collective, enduring intelligence that might, at some level, possess the capability to learn from past "mistakes", to demonstrate an institutional memory. That would only be the case if the body were somehow more than the sum of its individual member-states, which, by design and intention, the UN is not. Neither a federation nor a world government, the UN is merely an alternative arena for nations to display their fractiousness.

A final big problem presents itself: we are not nearly as rational in our decision making as we like to believe we are. Recent research from psychology shows that "when faced with more information than it can (or chooses to) handle, the mind tends to simplify the decision process by relying on simple rules" In other words, the putative lessons of history, beyond being inconclusive and contradictory, would be overwhelming for us and our institutions. This is not quite the same thing as putting our collective head in the sand. Instead, it's that we truly do not think much about the past and, to the slight extent that we do, we don't believe it has much to offer us in the way of helpful hints for getting on with our lives in the present. As the pace of change picks up – and technology dissolves the past – our rearview mirror shatters. Life, it seems, is for livin', not learnin'.

Brian Mason lives in James Bay.

If a Guaranteed Income were instituted, labour would still be performed, but employers would lose much of their leverage to exploit workers and devastate communities.

Stanley Aronowitz, former union organizer, *The Progressive*, Sept 1985

Books for Reading

Black Water: The Anthology of Fantastic Literature

by Andrew Tate

Hi everyone, it's Andrew again with another book review. For April I have chosen an anthology of short stories- most unusual short stories I must say, which came into my possession almost 30 years ago and I must have reread this book at least 6 times over the years. It is entitled Black Water: The Anthology of Fantastic Literature (1983, Lester & Orpen Dennys Limited, Toronto, ON, 967 pgs, s.c.) by Alberto Manguel, a respected novelist, teacher, intellectual, anthologist and critic born in Buenos Aires and now living in Toronto.

This is among many anthologies that Manguel has put together during the last 3 decades. The 72 stories in this anthology all deal with the fantastic, dreams mixing with reality, time travel, ghosts, horror and science fiction. These are weird, scary, unusual and intriguing short stories written by internationally re-known authors from all over the world such as H. G. Wells, Edith Wharton, Jules Verne, Julio Cortazar, Isaak Denison, Silvina Ocampo, W. Somerset Maugham, Franz Kafka, Ray Bradbury, Edgar Allen Poe, Robert Louis Stevenson, Oscar Wilde, Rudyard Kipling and Hermann Hesse. If you are a fan of the Twilight Zone TV series, than you will enjoy reading this anthology.

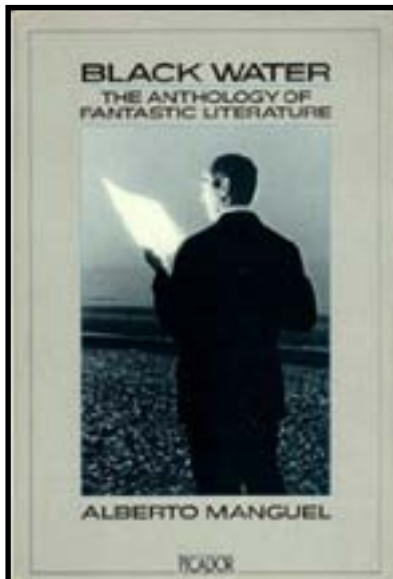
Within these short stories you will find a house slowly being possessed by something unseen; a penal colony with a most bizarre and inhumane method of punishing their criminals by means of a strange and sinister machine; a playground where a man who enters is instantly transformed into a child; a secret door in a wall which allows a child to enter a pastoreland full of fairies with weird hairstyles; a wife whose wealthy husband begins receiving love letters from his previous dead wife; a good Christian whom God rewards with a halo to wear during his lifetime much to his wife's embarrassment; and a man who gets lost in a museum, steals a small dark-colored pellet from an exhibit, leaves the museum, eats a pellet, goes to the zoo, and realizes to his astonishment that he can now communicate and sympathize with the caged animals.

I have always enjoyed re-reading these imaginative, suspenseful and bizarre stories; especially those from Latin America where one can find a common theme of reality mixing with unreality - where characters engaging in ordinary activities are suddenly thrust into fantastic, surreal and bizarre events and scenarios. I find that there is a stark, simple, surreal, frightening and even poetic mood in much of Latin American/Italian literature (Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Italo Calvino). For those of you who are unfamiliar with Alberto Manguel and his many excellent anthologies, Black Water is a good place to start.

This book is also available at the Oak Bay branch of the GVP under Fiction, the call number being BLA.

Until next month.

Andrew Tate



Victoria Coalition Against Poverty

VCAP meets every second Monday at 7 pm at Camas Books 2590 Quadra (@ Kings).

All are welcome! Pot-luck contributions and snacks are always welcome. Camas is a wheelchair-accessible space, but the washroom regrettably is not. Bus tickets will be available for those who need them. A children's play area is available.

If you haven't read it yet, check out VCAP's People's Plan for Pandora: vcapvictoria.wordpress.com/83-2/



LifeRing meetings encourage questions, comments and feedback throughout a meeting whose atmosphere often resembles a living room filled with sober friends having a relaxed, free conversation. Laughter is a common ingredient. Meetings are confidential, participation is free.

A new group meets Friday nights at 6:30 at Pearkes Community Centre.

Call (250) 920-2095 or visit www.liferingcanada.org for more information.

Taking it to the People!

Who speaks for the homeless? YOU DO!

Is it getting tougher or easier on the street? Why is violence increasing? Is nobody listening to you? Well, **we** are.

The Victoria Committee to End Homelessness (not the Coalition, we're the ginger group!) is holding meetings the second Wednesday of every month at 1:30 pm in the Chapel at Our Place.

This is your chance to speak, bitch, plan and run your own meeting. We'll be there, but just to help. Everyone is welcome and you don't have to be homeless right now.

You've got street experience and street needs and what you report or propose is valuable.

We can help pass it on and press for change and for answers.

We're activists who have been meeting for more than three years every Wednesday

at 7 pm at Silver Threads on Douglas Street at Herald. We challenge City Hall, the provincial government, the service providers and the police. Many of us have street experience.

We'll be in the Chapel at Our Place Wednesday April 13th at 1:30 pm, and every second Wednesday of the month.

For more info phone 250 480 4854 or email to: alisonacker@shaw.ca.



The Pink Silk Curtain

By Rodney Graham

A Pink Silk Curtain has descended around our continent. If you could ask an average person out there what they would like to read in their daily paper - I mean ask them privately, maybe at a local tavern what they really want to read, and if they told you truthfully - It would be very similar to what you actually do see in the daily papers across North America today.

The media writes for an audience. They write for the fortunate among us, the ones who had the privilege of finishing high school because they had a good family.

They write for those who can relate to normalcy: Marriage, work, career, finances, a small circle of friends perhaps. Here in North America that's all we know really.. all we want to know more precisely. There's an invisible curtain around this continent. But so hard it may as well be made of iron. Maybe you could call it a rose tinted curtain. We filter out anything that would make us too uncomfortable.

You see 'hard news,' news that is about things that happened both locally and internationally. Tragedy, glamour, excitement, news of the latest electronics to make our utopian world more convenient, more comfortable, easier. And anything related. Ubiquitous articles expressing the outrage and interest we all share because the man wants to make it illegal to talk on the phone while driving seems to be a big news item in the past few years..

The mainstream media write about mainly hard news of interest to these citizens of standing and place, any soft news is slanted towards the interests of the 'mainstream' public. There is often little in regards to injustice, inequity, and occurrences that those beyond our borders may experience when they try to immigrate into our country perhaps - and that is not mentioned in our papers today. Because the media writes with a certain audience in mind - y=their 'audience' doesn't like to hear about injustice and poverty. Street papers remind them of issues a different 'audience' wants to see.

Sometimes, however, hard news kicks the door of our self imposed ignorance in. Egypt showed that. What transpired there could not be hidden. What was happening for many years leading up to the occupation of that square finally made the news an important thing to see and hear here - everyday. Because it was happening every day - a revolution. Why was the government of Egypt so concerned about silencing the media? The media that was impartial that is.. not the mainstream media..

Until these 'hidden' inequities, injustices, and things that happen to refugees and do happen to the average citizen here - although it's not covered by the media - start to really begin to affect us, we will continue to live behind this pink curtain of utopian indulgence and ignorance. Perhaps a depression as happened in the 30s could light a fire under our lazy asses - here behind our pink silken curtain - so that we would finally be interested in making a difference for the less fortunate ones right there. Until then, however - No news is good news... here.

ANDREW A. TATE, B.A. - English

Do you need someone to proofread, edit, and/or type and print out your essays?

If so, then please e-mail me at mrpianoman@shaw.ca (I'm a musician as well) and let's meet.

My fee is \$40 an hour for editing/proofreading/typing

\$2.00/page for only straight copy typing. Title page is free

Thank you and I look forward to your call.



ask hothead

Greetings from the front lines! Thanks for all the feedback on the Mustard Seed piece folks, some thought I was too soft, others felt it was interesting and still others really strong. Another made a suggestion I want to follow: how about you do the series every other issue, mix it up in between! Here are questions I have been asked since the Transform Homelessness Advocacy Watch began filming the documentary on the state of homelessness, the state of police and security culture as well as citizens solutions. Keep your ears perked for the up and coming screening of the trailer for the documentary sometime in May!

The list from the homeless:

What are my rights with the police in regards to this new bylaw about meridians? Why did the Mayor elect (what a mistake hey) call the one and ONLY spokesperson for the homeless, the actual honourable Philippe Lucas, why did the Mayor get away with calling Philippe “Mighty Mouth” at the final passing of the backwards poor-bashing bylaw? Maybe because I never heard it till I watched it five times, and I shokingly asked myself “what did he just say?” He was vibrating from anger so much, it was hard to hear his words! The real question is, why was he so pissed at Philippe? (actual film footage for the Committee To End Homelessness documentary “Taking the Fall,” to be released this summer, new working title folks, what ya think?).

Mayor elect got pretty angered by folks fighting injustice, fighting for the rights of everyone, not just a few who are uncomfortable with what this system creates! We made the mess, we plan on fixing it, not doing the traditional colonial “sweep it under the rug”!

People maybe are waking up to the fact that it is the “we” that will change this world and make it better, we got to fight for justice, we must call up our self respect, or self sovereignty if you will. Many of us have been displaced by Colonial Hell. I have been displaced as a citizen of KKKCanada, displaced in my own body due to child sexual abuse at the hands of predominantly male sex offenders. That’s my life! An Outlaw formed out of Kolonial Klowhouse Kophouse blues brothers and sisters!

What are my rights as someone who has many warrants like trespassing (sitting on the stairs of a church) in regards to dealing with the police jacking me up to move along? (everywhere and anywhere it seems these days). One street friend and I came up with the idea of a action that would have folks come in a large group and demand that the warrants be dealt with then and there and not held over their heads, (like when they want to move them along.)

Why does it seem that front line workers are muzzled or have no voice when it comes to things like this documentary or speaking publicly at homeless rallies etc? Why are citizens being pressured to dig deeper and give more, volunteer more while Governments, Corporations and many middle class seem to ride along the good life, get great health care, travel many times in a year away from Victoria and yet remain enslaved to a system that cares not for them and seems just fine with the status quo? That was a mouthful! Why and how does this system create needless suffering with so many wanting so much change, so many desiring better ways and have ideas popping out of their mouths? Why indeed? Need to read and listen to great feminist leaders who have written many books on the topic, much anarchist literature exists that also compliments the work radical feminists as well as many other radicals have done for generations. Check out Gord Hill’s radical graphic novel in libraries near you!

Why was funding cut at AVI and the Needle Exchange closed? Why were people displaced from Pandora Green where THEY CHOSE to be on their own accord? How is it that one man bottom lines a “Good Neighborhood Agreement” and many good people felt they could not attend or keep attending the meeting since the chair, Dr. Matthews did not “recognize” everyone at the meetings, seemed pretty focused on his own agenda and one had to scream to get “recognized” so one could speak? Why did the city, as did the silent majority, continually say no to citizens as well as business owners requesting bathrooms/outhouses be made plenty to help with the issue of where the homeless and drunkards from bars do their thing, and by the way City of Victoria, WTF are you doing only putting in toilets for males? Women are still raped on these streets! SHAME! Why was the chair of the so called Good Neighborhood Agreement group standing with the police across the street from the Police station at the rally demanding Police Out Of Healthcare?

How do we deal with the Neo Liberal and Neo Conservative health issue: Condo’itis? The Neo-Conservative Minority Harper’s Dictatorship? (what do you think the switch is about regarding “Government of Canada” now must be referred as “The Harper Government.” This is your basic “wanta be dictator” scenario folks, really, not joking, HELLO OH!

On the Police State, Number One Biggest Question I have heard far too many times to count, Why did Alan Lowe hire Jamie Graham on his way out of office, especially with his unbelievable horrible past record in Vancouver, his last post?

Well, I bet Alan’s riding it good about now hey? This from a guy who could not handle the Women Helping Women Coalition around the issue of senior abuse at Kiwanis Village a few years back.

Well, that about wraps it up for this issue folks, can’t wait to hear your letters to the editor and any questions you want me to post, I will, I mean it, why? ‘Cause I mean to work for justice till I’m dead! Sun Down Town, Sun Down Town, don’t let them catcha buddy when the sun goes down, there won’t be no more friends around, don’t let them catch you buddy when the sun goes down!

hothead small case, Big Passion! I acknowledge I am a visitor here on Lekwungen Territory and I was born a Métis-Acadian in the North End of Winterpeg Manitoba Red River Cree Territory (please correct me if you know the proper name of this territory!) Write to Kym c/o streetnewz@islandnet.com.



Big Labour Rally in Madison Wisconsin, March 12th, after Governor Scott Walker rammed a bill through removing workers’ rights to collectively bargain.
Photo thanks to Twitterer @philgarlic, www.philephotography.com.

The Advocate May Day !! by W. Robert Arnold

When I was a boy I remember May Day as a distress signal used by pilots who were going down in flames. Only later did I learn it is also the International Workers Day we celebrate on May 1 each year. There are parades and Union Picnics and speeches extolling the virtue of work and solidarity.

Workers have Unions to protect their rights and represent their interests. This is good because the lot of the working people, even those without Unions has been made better by Unions.

Historically, poor people, unemployed people and people with disabilities have not been seen as “Workers” by the Unions. The interests of workers have sometimes conflicted with the interests of the poor. Higher wages, for instance, have driven up the cost of living to the detriment of poor people living on fixed incomes.

Only recently have Unions acknowledged that poor people are “workers,” who have been marginalized one way or another. Injury, disability, disease, technological advances and the economy itself tend to make it more difficult for some workers to maintain employment in these times. Unions are beginning to care! Great!

Now Unions must take another look at the idea of a Universal Guaranteed Adequate Income that has been widely recognized for many years as the cure for poverty. They have been afraid that this idea would allow employers to pay workers less. No one wants yet another subsidy for corporations. Corporate tax breaks are already too big a subsidy. Remember that these tax breaks are not yielding the number of jobs and better working conditions promised by the corporations.

Now is the time for representatives of the non-working to talk with Union leaders about common interests and to share analysis and visions. Now is the time for an alliance between worker and non-worker. That alliance must create a campaign and develop strategies and tactics to influence the politics of this country.

We need to create a new paradigm with which to address our common problems: a non-partisan, big tent approach that will motivate voters to change the way politics is done in Canada, to create a more real democracy and finally, to eradicate poverty in this country.

I am waiting for a call from the leaders of the Unions in B.C. and in Canada to initiate a process for setting up the talks I think are so necessary.

Robert has fought poverty, his own and others, for over 45 years.



Jobsite Safety: How it *really* works

by Mike Thomas

While working up north under often extreme conditions and in very dangerous surroundings, workers are constantly told that safety is the #1 priority. Is it really? Or is it just a way for companies to push us around and try to reduce insurance premiums and WCB costs.

Did you know that a safety rating must be included in a bid for a job? No matter how much money you have, the cost of doing business requires that you not have more than a certain level of “RECORDED” safety incidents. That way the big boys like Suncor get their butts covered. Here is what safety really is to companies... The anecdotes below happened mostly on the Suncor Firebag3 project but also occur on many jobsites around the province and have for many years. Companies circumvent the reporting process to avoid penalties. Major clients like Suncor & their large contractors focus on blaming workers rather than improving safety. Together they pass responsibility back and forth so that no one is held accountable. Do you have any idea how much is spent on concealing, avoiding, and suppressing safety concerns and injuries?

Safety is a carpenter who tore his tendon right out of his elbow while working, and gets pressured to see a company doctor instead of a real doctor, so it won't be reported or treated properly. The company does not want to pay higher WCB premiums and have to report a lost time injury on their record. That the man might be permanently affected doesn't register.

Safety is a pipefitter that badly sprained (perhaps tore) his ankle on the jobsite and was kept hobbling around on crutches for days before being given a desk and a newspaper for weeks because if he doesn't actually take time off to heal and get treatment then the company doesn't have to report it as a lost time injury.

Safety is bringing a man to work every day, only to drive him 100km+ to town for therapy (if you can call it that in Fort McMurray) so the company doesn't have to properly rate the injury. Even flying men to Edmonton two or three times a week specially so that they don't technically have to take any days OFF work.

Getting the idea yet? How frustrating is it to be told publicly a thousand times REPORT EVERY-THING and then when you try to it gets swept away, buried in paperwork, you suffer abuse and harassment, and actual serious issues are not addressed?

Safety is telling hundreds of workers at Suncor Firebag 3 that AECON Lockerbie & Hole, as well as Suncor, will NOT acknowledge that cleanliness, food quality & safety, ability to sleep, rampant sickness such as cold & flu, and outbreaks of scabies (craps), bedbugs, and rodent infestations all affect job safety. That workers are *not allowed* to raise any living conditions issues at safety meetings and are intimidated or punished for doing so. How then is it fair to fire a worker for blogging about these “non work” conditions under a “work” site policy? Wouldn't it drive you nuts to see a fellow worker collapse from nutritional issues and then be told by safety to “eat better” while being given disgusting unhealthy food that makes people sick, and often not even getting enough food for lunch? This happened.

Safety is when an electrician cuts his hand (this was me) innocently, forcing him to spend 6 hours defending himself and how he WAS indeed wearing all his protective gear. Then filling out paperwork under duress, being intimidated to write certain things and change my statement, all the while being told quietly “why didn't you just wrap it in tape and ignore it?” The answer is because I could lose my hand to infection, thanks very much.

Safety is a worker who blows out his knee (seriously damaging it) who is then intimidated into seeing a “company doctor” who does not even touch or examine the injury and prescribes physiotherapy and exercise which then completely destroys the knee leading to emergency surgery.

What good is a “right to refuse” work when everyone knows it puts you on the top of the next layoff list, or the company will pressure you then find someone else who won't stand up to them and do it anyway.

From other sites, safety is exposing workers to toxic levels of benzene and other chemicals and the company doctor telling them that their puking all night, headaches and illnesses for weeks afterwards are a result of the “scent additive” not the highly deadly benzene. It's working at Syncrude and living at their camp right on the property where the air is thick with chemicals and can burn your eyes, irritate your throat, cause asthmatic reactions and poison you slowly but the company refuses to acknowledge any adverse conditions exist.

Safety is developing high rates of cancers, diabetes, dealing with strokes and heart attacks, ulcers, and other infirmities contributed to by camp living conditions and jobsite substance exposures and not being recognized or taken care of for it. That everything from back strain to heart failure to ruined joints are a result of “pre-existing conditions” is an insult to the average human intelligence.

Many of these issues can be addressed, we can reduce jobsite injuries and incidents dramatically. Fake lip service, and highly public relations oriented campaigns are not the way to do it. We have to be treated with respect, involved in the process, housed in decent conditions, and given the proper tools and equipment to do our jobs as well as the time to do it in. The company sets the tone for safety and productivity with their attitudes, standards, and treatment of workers. Do it once, do it safely, and do it right.

Somewhere in the sea of paperwork surrounding safety and injuries in Alberta a trend is appearing, we are getting hurt MORE often not less often, but less is being reported accurately.

Corruption is rampant, the government is not doing anything to control it.

This article was originally published November 11, 2010 at www.adhdcanuck.ca, and is reprinted with permission.



photo source unknown somewhere in wisconsin ...



Sometimes Workers Should Just Say No !

Like coal, we have to say no to clear-cutting. Clear cuts hurt forestry by reducing the harvest to half of what it could have been with selective cutting. It hurts salmon fishing, tourism, agriculture and the overall value of BC's wood.

Intact forests are known to be vital to all humanity in providing: water, oxygen to breath, softening all extremes of weather, biodiversity, undiscovered medicines and much more. As water and oxygen come under threat and weather extremes escalate, massive clear-cutting will rightly be seen, by more and more people, as a crime against humanity.

We need to choose sustainability and stick by it. We are part of a global problem that is real. We have to do our part, or be seen to be acting against humanity's best interests. In a destabilized world? Not good.

Soon, the world will come asking for our water. First in line, USA. We will share on a humanitarian basis, or likely be overpowered. We need to start the discussion now, about practices and principles for water sharing. We must not lose the support of the International Community.

Humanity is dependent on nations who have water surpluses. They're depending on us to maintain the resource by not incapacitating our hydrological systems with unsustainable timber harvesting and use of poisonous substances in the watersheds.

10% timber harvest, over a 10 year period, is the maximum we should allow for land use in the face of rapid climate change. This timber should be selectively cut, leaving the canopy intact. No pesticides should be used on land after harvest. Wood should be cut in local, retooled mills. The value-added products will be certifiable and priced accordingly, creating a just transition, a CEP Union precept.

Green business is the fastest growing sector in Canada. When one door closes, as it should on clear cutting and poisoning the forest with toxins, and, because the people decide it is the wisest action they can take, another door is found to be already open for business. See nextworldtv.com for some inspiring ideas on developing a triple-bottom-line, responsible community.

*Jen and Stephen Fisher-Bradley
Women's Food and Water Initiative, Port Alberni BC*



That Four Letter Word

- "WORK" -

by Larry Gambone

The Oxford English Dictionary definition of work: actions, doings, task, actions involving effort or exertion directed at a definite end.

One way our economic system is totally screwed up has to do with what is considered work. Note well, the dictionary says work consists of effort or action with a purpose. This means any physical or mental activity with an end result in mind is work. Hence, playing the violin is work, as is making breakfast, studying philosophy, pulling weeds in the garden or volunteering for a community organization.

Pretty straight forward eh? But not in our idiot economic system. How so? Suppose you are on welfare and volunteer 30 hours a week at a seniors residence, or you are a stay-at-home parent. The capitalist system, or rather its shills, do not consider you to be working. The notion of work has been distorted, changed from purposeful effort, to solely that which brings monetary reward. Everything else, even working 16 hours a day as a volunteer, is considered non-work, and hence of not much value to society.

Sick eh? But hang on, it gets worse. While the aforementioned volunteering welfare recipient is considered a parasite, even though she is doing something very beneficial, if she instead worked in a napalm factory, she would be considered a useful member of society! Doing something that ends up killing people is OK, helping them is not.

In a capitalist society wage labour is the only form of work that is directly profitable for the capitalist. Hence, the need to denigrate all other forms of work, as these forms threaten the ability to exploit labour. But in the real world, the one that exists outside of that concocted by those fantasy-spinners, the "economists," so much of what is valuable in life is done freely and without monetary compensation as the ultimate goal.

Society would collapse without this important form of work. Think what would happen if no one raised their children, looked after their houses and yards, or volunteered for the innumerable groups and associations that keep the societal wheels turning. If the system had to pay for all of this non-paid work, there wouldn't be enough money to do so.

In the long term, we ought to abolish the wage system as the IWW (International Workers of the World, aka the One Big Union or "Wobblies") has demanded since 1905. In the meantime, a Guaranteed Annual Income (GAI) would help reestablish work in its authentic sense. Everyone would get the GAI and there would be much more freedom to work at what people were really interested in doing.

Larry was raised on Vancouver Island, was active in the student and anti-war movements in the '60s. He's currently involved in his neighborhood association, and is a member of the Van Island Branch of the IWW.



In our hands is placed a power greater than their hoarded gold. Greater than the might of armies magnified a thousand fold.

Solidarity Forever – Ralph Chaplin 1915

Mission Statement - May Day March 2011:

May Day, International Workers' Day, has particular meaning to the working class of the world. It is a time for renewal of the struggle for justice, particularly in the workplace. Justice in our world has different meanings but May Day recognizes that the vast majority of the population

"¡No pasarán!"
-- "they shall not pass"--

a keynote slogan in the 1930s during struggles in Spain, France and England against fascism.

must take waged work in order to survive. Work, paid and unpaid, is the universal human condition.

May Day recognizes that the power for change is in the hands of the workers. It recognizes that workers themselves, armed with knowledge derived from universal public education, know that the world is in crisis and that only a working class movement can find a new path. The struggle for clean energy, food, drinkable water, safe housing, universal public health care and universal old age security, world peace and an end to racism will only come about when the workers, those who produce all wealth, rise up and find common cause with their fellow workers throughout the world. A healthy, safe and meaningful life for all humanity is possible.

The struggle for justice is ongoing and winnable. On May 1st, 2011 we'll make that point in a march in the streets of Victoria, BC. Victoria, in unceded Coast Salish territory, is the capital of the Province of British Columbia, one of the wealthiest places on earth. We intend to inspire Canada and the world by reaffirming our solidarity with the working people of our community.

We ask that you join us in the planning and execution of this event. Contact us at maydayvictoria@gmail.com. We ask that unionized workers call upon their union locals to endorse this march. We ask that all workers and their families join us on May 1st in

Hasta la victoria, Siempre!
-- "onward to victory, forever"--

the closing words in Che Guevara's letter to Fidel Castro as Che left for Bolivia to spread the revolution.



Labour Supports Guaranteed Income

from C.A. L'Hirondelle and www.livableincome.org

Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)

COSATU is a member of the South Africa Basic Income Grant Coalition.

"BIG [Basic Income Grant] would be a universal grant, a right extended to all citizens regardless of their age or status... a streamlined system, not means-tested, thereby avoiding the hazards of maladministration, corruption, or arbitrary bureaucratic decision-making. While the grant would be universal, wealthier South Africans would cross-subsidise it through a 'solidarity tax'. Research commissioned since 1998 has shown that a BIG is both economically viable as well as financially sustainable."

Goals:

- Provide everyone with a minimum level of income,
- enable the nation's poorest households to better meet their basic needs,
- stimulate equitable economic development,
- promote family and community stability,
- affirm and support the inherent dignity of all

For more information: www.big.org.za

LA Labour News Jim Smith, editor

"Labor and our emerging anti-corporate alliance, must begin to define an acceptable living standard - including food, shelter, recreation, health care, and education - below which no one, and no family, can fall. This guaranteed annual income would apply to all, including low-wage workers, the unemployed, homeless, disabled and retired. It would give a measure of security to millions on the edge of hopelessness or homelessness. It would serve to replace competition among workers with unity based on working to constantly improve living conditions."

Jim Smith, "After Seattle - Where Do We Go From Here?" 2001, LA Labour News

Former Director with International Labour Organization - Guy Standing

"Trade unionists, as well as all those who count themselves as egalitarians and advocates of social solidarity, should support a basic income as a right of a good society in which dignified work could flourish... A basic income would also enhance real freedom.... It would encourage people to gain greater personal control over how they use their time. Anybody who counts himself or herself as on 'the left' should be keen for the poor and the vulnerable gaining more control over the key assets of society and time is one of them. By the same token, granting a basic income would help to legitimize forms of work other than labour, such as care work and community work... There is a huge opportunity to develop a new progressive vision, if we have the courage to take it and have open minds... A basic income should be part of that."

From: "Why unions should campaign for a basic income." European Trade Union Institute, Review 04/2004. guystanding.com

Vancouver & District Labour Council representative Sharon Yandle

"Guaranteed income was once a key demand of poor and working class women and it's time to put it front and centre again."

Public Forum
"Seeking an End to Women's Poverty," January 16, 2004, Vancouver



Throughout March revolution fever took hold in various countries including Egypt, Bahrain, Yemen, Libya, and the USA. Even people in Afghanistan and Iraq, women and children among them, took to the streets leaving many scratching their heads about the sort of “democracy” that is being imposed by gunpoint from imperialist governments, including our own.

In Kabul (photo above, from www.rawa.org) banners read “Permanent US military bases equals permanent slavery of Afghan people,” and “Occupation equals killing plus destruction.” A pamphlet distributed by the Solidarity Party of Afghanistan read: “The involvement of the US government in Afghanistan, that has a long history of cruelty, has not improved conditions in the country, but increased corruption, poverty, murders, poppy cultivation and trafficking.” The protesters called for an end of the U.S. role in Afghanistan and strongly condemned the U.S. intention to establish a permanent military base in the country.

In Basra, Iraqi security forces used water cannon and batons to disperse protesters rallying against corrupt officials and poor basic services including a shortage of jobs, electricity, and water. A Reuters reporter at the scene said some journalists were beaten by security forces. In Baghdad (photo top right, REUTERS/Saad Shalash), protesters placed flowers on officials carrying stun grenades. Thirty year old Noor Mohammed, a graduate from Basra University’s engineering faculty, said: “I regret electing those people because their democracy is that people should smile at (Prime Minister Nuri) al-Maliki and should say nothing to him” (www.emirates247.com).

The photo from Libya, bottom right, is all over the internet. It seems to express a common cry from people all around the world. They want an end to dictatorships, war, and imperialism. It’s time to bring the troops home and examine our own authoritarian regimes, disguised as democracies.



Haven’t heard the other sides of the story yet?
Plug into Alternative Media from Victoria
community-media.ca

Peace River Valley -- Site C Dam Watch



The Peace Valley Environment Association (PVEA) is opposed to the Site C dam being contemplated for the Peace River. The proposed dam would flood the most productive 82 km of the Peace Valley from the damsite (7km sw of Fort St. John city center) to just above Hudson’s Hope. That would be like flooding the Fraser from New Westminster to Hope. And some of the best agricultural land in Northern BC, class 1, 2, and 3. However, the valley sides are unstable and a large amount of sliding (sloughing) and erosion would be expected, destroying perhaps as much agricultural land as the flooding.

The PVEA maintains that Site C is not in the public interest, the cost would be too high in both dollars and impacts to this valuable agriculture land and ecosystems.

Farmers Arlene and Ken Boon, with the help of Nick Parsons, have grown oats on 20 acres of land at Bear Flats (which would be flooded or eroded by the reservoir) and donated it to the PVEA for its fight against the dam. People are encouraged to donate to this fundraiser or just to the PVEA in general on the PVEA website www.peacevalley.ca. Information on the valley is available at www.itsourvalley.ca including a report on the valley’s critical role in climate change. For more information (or misinformation) on the Site C proposal go to the BC Hydro website and search Site C.

Brian Churchill, PVEA Director. Photo is Nick Parsons combining. Due to large numbers of grasshoppers, the makeshift contraption on front of combine pick up encourages them to jump out of the way and not end up in the hopper.

From Don Startin: Raising awareness of this issue is important. You’d be surprised how many folks haven’t heard about it. To receive a No Site C campaign button, and a supply of book markers, send an self addressed stamped envelope to Don Startin at # 612-1745 Leighton Rd, Victoria BC, V8R 6R6. You can carry the book markers, which list reasons why the dam shouldn’t be built, and distribute them to people who ask about your button.

A Song for May Day

Sing to the tune of Daisy, Bicycle Built for Two.

May Day, May Day that's the real
workers' day

Labour's History says, "Don't give our
day away."

It's time that the working class says:
Stick Labour Day up your asses
And ain't it great to celebrate
On the glorious first of May?

art farquharson



May Day 2010

Assumed Mythic Proportions celebrate la day
first time in 12 years sans my furry sunray,
AMPs* now drunk on le Day or Absinthe gay
whatever falls first or purple plinthing away!
All most all rowdy revel in this very Day
so don't spend or save \$\$\$ don't even Pray.

A new year of labor anti-lyrical sodden looms
as economy, She plays ruskie roulette n'Swoons
And oil spill size of polluted Lake Ontario toms
loiters offshore Louisiana Purchase a la EA Poe!
Human bees our worlds we work too destroy,
we labor hardest to erode life and kill joy!

So save up that inflated money, obese honey,
zsaszagabor like glutinous End tres near
for les workers non-workers bums & intergalactic
Tourists will ALL be budget-piled/priced on
The Greenest Garbage Heap!

© john alan douglas vancouver bc canada earth



Tunisia Egypt Libya Wisconsin!

The spirit of the people is melding in certain spots around the world
With the world historical spirit and it has its bright side and
Its dark side.

In history, people have died for the right to
Bargain collectively!

I sat in my bedroom in West Philadelphia talking with Thomas Jefferson's Sixth
great granddaughter (my wife) about revolution* in the United States,
Then went out to stand on the fire escape of our building,
Where a thought which did not appear quite to be mine
Chastened me: "You just had a seditious conversation with your wife in there."

My response: "You just go ahead and bust me, I dare you. I'll take you
To the Supreme Court and humiliate you in the eyes of the world!"

Long live the people!

**a nonviolent revolution of values or a violent one?*

© DH Kerby

www.dhkerby.com - his newest book - A Year in Paris and an Ordeal in
Bangkok: Collected Poems and Political Essays is available at Amazon.com.



BCGEU
representative
Holly Page took
Canadian solidarity
to Wisconsin

Hello! My name is Joel Bernbaum and I am a
theatre artist working on an exciting new
"verbatim theatre" project with the staff at the
Belfry Theatre.

Verbatim theatre is a kind of theatre where the
script is constructed from interviews or
transcripts. The topic of the project is
homelessness in Victoria. One of the main
advantages of verbatim theatre is that it allows
us to go in with broad questions, as opposed to
our own agenda.

For example, we want to know what people are
thinking about homelessness in Victoria? What are the stories? What are the root causes? What
are the effects? What are the reactions?

We know that we will eventually produce a play from this project, but we don't know what
message of the play is right now—that will come from what people tell us. We need to talk to
people in order to find out. We want to make a piece of theatre that will help move the conversa-
tion about homelessness forward.

I would be happy to answer any questions about the project. At this early stage in the project, I
am open to all suggestions and would love to hear your ideas and your stories. Another great
thing about verbatim theatre is that it is possible for anyone's story to become a part of the play.
We would like to talk to people from a range of ages/races/social and economic backgrounds,
etc. You are welcome to remain anonymous if you would prefer.

Please contact me by email at joel@belfry.bc.ca or by phone at 250-385-6835 x236.

I look forward to hearing from you - Respectfully, Joel



In early March, Wisconsin's State Assembly, led by Republican Governor
Scott Walker, voted 53-42 to approve a bill that has provoked an enormous
uprising from unionized labour and their supporters. In response, the
Wisconsin State Capitol was occupied for over three weeks by teachers,
students, firefighters, and even police officers.

Similar union busting measures have been introduced in a number of
Republican governed U.S. States, including Indiana, Ohio, Iowa,
Michigan, and Florida.

For news updates - videos, photos, audio - check voiceshakes.wordpress.com
or other independent blog/twitter/facebook sites from Wisconsin.
Photo (below) thanks to Peter Patau.



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"There are several advantages of a basic income that trade unionists and progressives should surely wish to promote...it would tend to strengthen a sense of social solidarity. The need to strengthen this cannot be over-emphasized... it has never been more threatened or fragile."

Guy Standing, Why Unions should campaign for a basic income, TRANSFER Review, 2004



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not keep you there.



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